

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 8488

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, UR, US

SUBJECT: MORE ON THE BREZHNEV WEAPONS BAN PROPOSAL

REF: MOSCOW 8434

1. SUMMARY. AN MFA USA DIVISION ARMS CONTROL EXPERT CONFIRMS THAT BREZHNEV'S JUNE 13 REFERENCE TO CURBING WEAPONS "MORE TERRIBLE THAN ATOMIC" WILL PROBABLY RESULT IN A SOVIET INITIATIVE AND SAYS THAT IT MAY EMERGE IN THE BILATERAL U.S.-SOVIET CONTEXT. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING A CONVERSATION WITH AN EMBOFF JUNE 17, OLEG SOKOLOV, COUNSELOR IN THE MFA USA DIVISION AND AN EXPERT ON SALT AND MBFR, WAS ASKED WHAT BREZHNEV HAD MEANT BY HIS REFERENCE TO SUPER-WEAPONS. SOKOLOV REPLIED THAT THE REFERENCE WAS NOT A NEW ONE FOR BREZHNEV. HE SAID THAT BREZHNEV HAD SAID SOMETHING ALONG THOSE LINES IN
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HIS ALMA ATA SPEECH OF AUGUST 1973; OUR RE-READING OF

THAT SPEECH, HOWEVER, FAILED TO TURN UP SUCH A REFERENCE.

3. SOKOLOV SAID THAT THE BREZHNEV REFERENCE PROBABLY INCLUDED, BUT WAS NOT LIMITED TO, ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATION. HE SAID THAT AT SOME POINT THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE A SOVIET INITIATIVE AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE BREZHNEV SPEECH. ASKED IF IT WOULD BE MADE IN A BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL (E.G., UN) CONTEXT, HE SAID THAT THE U.S.-OSVIET FRAMEWORK WOULD PROBABLY BE THE BEST VENUE FOR SUCH A PROPOSAL. HE DID NOT THINK, HOWEVER, THAT THE VOSITES HAVE THIS IN MIND FOR THE COMING SUMMIT MEETING IN WASHINGTON.

4. SOKOLOV ALSO SAID THAT, FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF CSCE, HE EXPECTED PROGRESS IN MBFR, "ESPECIALLY IF" THE RUMORS ARE TRUE ABOUT A NEW WESTERN INITIATIVE. HE ADDED THAT THE SOVIETS ARE SERIOUS ABOUT MOVING FROM POLITICAL DETENTE TO MILITARY DETENTE AND THAT THEY HAVE A STRONG POLITICAL DESIRE FOR A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THE VIENNA TALKS. (WE NOTE THAT THE BREZHNEV-HONECKER COMMUNIQUE IN PRAVDA JUNE 18 NOTED THAT A CSCE SUCCESS WOULD IMPROVE PROSPECTS IN VIENNA.)

5. COMMENT. SOKOLOV'S TREATMENT OF THE BREZHNEV REFERENCE IS CONSISTENT WITH GROMYKO'S, IN THE LATTER'S TALK WITH THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR (REFTEL). THE IMPRESSION CONVEYED BY SOKOLOV IS THAT THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY IS NOW BEGINNING AN EFFORT TO PUT SOME FLESH ON THE FLIMSY BONES OF BREZHNEV'S JUNE 13 STATEMENT. THERE WAS NO APPARENT DESIRE ON SOKOLOV'S PART TO INDICATE THAT THE SOVIET INITIATIVE HE DESCRIBED IS IMMINENT.
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